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pital at the *Wilderness*," not at "Dowdall's Tavern"; page 155, first line, "Lee's messenger found Ewell with Early," Early and his division were at York, quite well to the East; page 122, first line, "Robertson's *Confederate* Brigade," not "Federal."

Captain Battine has done faithful and able work in his book, and it must remain a permanent contribution to the history of the crisis of the Confederacy, the breaking of the wave of the Southern soldiers' victory, when it had reached the very crest of the ridge against which it rose.

J. P. S.

History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850. By JAMES FORD RHODES, LL.D., Litt.D. Vol. V., 1864-1866. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1904. Pp. xii, 659.)

MR. RHODES's fifth volume begins with Sherman's march to the sea and ends with the Congressional elections of the autumn of 1866. The first three chapters bring to a close his long, careful, and thorough narrative of the Civil War. The next two chapters discuss, with equal fullness, the life of both the sections in war-time, throwing light on many subjects never before so well treated in any general work, and setting in a just perspective facts and deeds and men that have too often been neglected. One is glad to find the work of the Sanitary Commission amply described and to see such unobtrusive patriots as Frederick Law Olmsted and James B. Fry taking their places with the captains and the statesmen.

A shorter chapter deals with the most repellent topics that confront the student of the period—military prisons, North and South, and such episodes as the Dahlgren raid and the Fort Pillow massacre. In the opening paragraphs of this particular chapter, Mr. Rhodes, discussing the material for the study of the prison controversy, tells us, with his usual candor, that he cannot claim to have mastered it all; but in those very paragraphs, as well as in the résumé that follows, he exhibits admirably well some of his best qualities as a historian. No subject, surely, could test more severely his patience, fairness, and good sense; and so well does he stand the test that I shall be surprised if any future investigation shall seriously shake his general conclusions. Neither side escapes blame, no part of the revolting story is obscured, and yet intelligent men of both sides will, I fancy, find in Mr. Rhodes's judgments a certain relief. It is war, rather than men, that he in substance chiefly arraigns. When one has finished his unsparing recital of the facts, his portrayal of the hideous sufferings of helpless brave men, it is Sherman's famous saying about war that comes into one's mind. With the maxim, "All the right is never on one side and all the wrong on the other," Mr. Rhodes makes his real summary of the whole wretched business. He thus also incidentally displays the temper in which this volume has been written.

As an excuse for what he would have us consider a rather hurried handling of the voluminous material of the prison controversy, Mr.

Rhodes offers his great desire to see his long task finished. That desire, no doubt, also explains why his final chapter covers a longer period than all the others in the volume. Putting aside everything but Reconstruction, this chapter recounts—briefly, for Mr. Rhodes, but carefully, clearly, and with a full display of sources—all the important steps by which President Johnson and the Republicans in Congress came to an open breach before the country. Salient features of the author's treatment of this difficult period are his marked preference for Lincoln over all the other men that ever in any wise took a hand in Reconstruction, and his equally clear approval, at a later stage, of the plan for which Trumbull and Fessenden were chiefly responsible. Both judgments will strongly commend themselves to open-minded students who do not fail to note how the conditions of the problem were constantly changing. One infers that in the next volume the narrative will proceed even faster. Mr. Rhodes is eminently well-equipped for a close study of the early years of peace; but no one who rightly appreciates his labors for the truth of history can begrudge him an earlier completion of his entire undertaking than he could possibly compass without some change of plan.

Whatever the future may show, he has to his credit one fairly well defined achievement. He has finished in this volume the best history of the Civil War. The reviewer would rather dwell a moment on that fact—not, he would hope, without some interest for Americans far outside of the ranks of the history-writing brotherhood—than scrutinize, after the minute and technical fashion in criticism most affected in these pages, the one volume now before us. After all, the merely technical side of the historian's work is quite the least important. In no other department of scholarship is it so nearly possible to dispense altogether with anything like a professional training and equipment: a consideration, however, which becomes less encouraging when one has to add that of all scholars the historian needs the amplest general training, both from study and experience, and the most various equipment. Nor does any other scholar need to keep alive so many interests, sympathies, enthusiasms. We should all, I fancy, be the better fitted for our own work in history if our interest in such work as this of Mr. Rhodes were less professional than human; if in each successive volume we looked first for the past—for heroes and battles, for statesmen and measures, for the life of other times—and only later considered the object-lesson in methods, the merely shoppish values in the work.

I venture thus to moralize apropos of this book rather than another because I think Mr. Rhodes's work so clearly entitled to the first place among the various enterprises in historiography now in progress in this country. Even more might be said of its importance. A very distinguished critic of American civilization, who is also singularly observant of the intellectual life of other lands, in the course of a comparison of our recent work in letters with that of Englishmen which was generally unfavorable to American writers, made an exception of history. In

that field, he thought, we had quite held our own. And now that Green and Stubbs and Freeman and Creighton are gone, is there in England any historian who to a subject equally large has devoted, as Mr. Rhodes has, ample time, means, patience, and ability? It is not unreasonable, I think, to claim for the work of this American historian an importance not quite equalled by the work of any of his contemporaries who are writing history in the same tongue.

The claim, of course, cannot rest solely or mainly on the mere bulk of his endeavor, the scale of his devotion. The work must be excellent after its kind. But on this point also the judgment of competent critics is, I suppose, made up. They seem to be fairly unanimous, and the essence of their consensus is, that Mr. Rhodes tells the truth. It would probably be hard to improve on that plain statement of the solid excellence of all his work. And it conveys, in his case, very high praise. Mr. Rhodes has been dealing with very live matter; with events that have all happened in his own life-time; with questions still warmly debated; with a great war, the wounds of which are not all healed; with men who are themselves still among the living or for whom women still wear mourning. If we can nearly all agree that his long recital is, in the least sophisticated sense, truthful, I am not sure that we do not thereby pay him the very highest tribute of all.

And to pronounce him truthful we need not be ourselves experts in his period, or even trained students of history. He has supplied us with ample means to verify his facts, to weigh his conclusions. His references and citations, always abundant, seem to grow more voluminous with each successive volume. In the volume before us they are so detailed and careful that sometimes, when the point at issue is of no great consequence, the effect is fairly comical. On page 5, for instance, speaking of a notion at one time prevalent in the North that General Sherman was out of his head, Mr. Rhodes cites in a footnote a newspaper editorial expressing the opinion. Macaulay, one fancies, or even Gibbon, would have thought this sufficient. But Mr. Rhodes adds, "I have had a careful search made of the files of the *New York Tribune* and *Cincinnati Commercial*, and feel pretty sure that this is the first charge of insanity published in the newspapers". To determine whether tinned vegetables were ever issued to the Union troops, he sought the help of a scientist who studied for him the history of the canning industry. Fortified with this and other testimony, he writes (p. 249 n.): "It may be affirmed with confidence that canned peas and canned string-beans were not furnished the army or the Sanitary Commission at any time during the war". The reader feels that with such a guide he is safe from the negative deception of omissions, as well as from anything approaching a wilful perversion of the truth. It is impossible to suspect Mr. Rhodes of withholding, either for partisan or artistic reasons, anything that tends to enlightenment. I cannot think of another historian who so constantly produces the effect of complete candor, who is so indefatigably minded to tell all that can be

reckoned of consequence, and to display unreservedly the sources of his knowledge and the grounds of his opinions. Citations in the text are so common that some readers will doubtless think them a fault of style. Many pages are little better than mosaics, being made up wholly of quotations, thinly cemented with the author's merely explanatory comments.

This may be one of the reasons why Mr. Rhodes is sometimes criticized as cautious and non-committal. No doubt we should all be glad, now and then, if he would make a little more of his own opinions, and speak "as one having authority". In this particular volume, for instance, although he gives us material in plenty for a judgment of Sherman's course with private property and with non-combatants, he himself pronounces none at all. A historian is of necessity a teacher of morals, and one expects a comment on Sherman's declaration that if he had thought it advisable, for military reasons, to burn Columbia, he would have burnt it with no more feeling than if it had been a prairie-dog village. But on the whole the charge of non-committalism is unjust. Mr. Rhodes is usually bold enough and clear enough in stating his conclusions, both about facts and men. If he seems lacking in that sort of candor, it is because, besides his candor in displaying his sources, he is also extremely candid in forming his opinions. He has the poise, the charity and fairness, and the knowledge of life, that usually make for moderation, hardly ever for startling pronouncements. On this very subject of sweeping judgments he has stated his own view clearly. It will probably be disappointing to his younger, but not to his older readers. Quoting Macaulay's brilliant sentence on the evils of clipped silver, he comments, "Like all strong general averments this probably overstates the case." Accordingly, he is forever making allowances for the rhetorical narrator and the over-excited witness. To withstand always the historian's constant temptation to overstate and overcolor, to discover and to tell the plain truth—this is, clearly, his resolve. To write history after such a fashion demands a firm will, and a rather rare kind of honesty, requiring the sacrifice of many opportunities for effects which most readers crave and most writers strive incessantly to accomplish. It is improbable that any paragraph in these five volumes will ever be singled out for any quality that catches the eye. Mr. Rhodes is never brilliant, never the fine writer.

Yet one hesitates to pronounce his work lacking in what we call literary quality. When we consider it from that point of view, many strictures do, no doubt, suggest themselves. Mr. Rhodes's prose is not imaginative. Fancy, grace, tenderness are wanting. Few phrases strike one as particularly fit or fine. The pace is slow, and it never changes. Mr. Rhodes moves through the most exciting episodes quite as he plods over the most matter-of-fact reaches of his narrative. His battle-pieces are disappointing. The style is heavy, the constructions, though rarely defective, are sometimes rather clumsy—with the not unpleasing clumsiness of the muscle-bound athlete. But when these

specific criticisms have been assembled, an awkward fact stands in the way of a dissatisfied general verdict: one has found the book, after all, decidedly readable. The author's candor and sincerity and thoroughness, his great appetite for truth, his deep, masculine interest in his subject—these things far outweigh his mainly negative infelicities. We know that Mr. Rhodes has not neglected to study methods in historiography; on the contrary, he has with his customary care and patience examined the ways of the masters, from Herodotus down. May he not have been wise to choose for himself the style and manner which he finds most natural, most expressive of his own everyday standards of judgment and of taste?

At any rate, he has made a thoroughly American book. In that respect, it is comparable to General Grant's *Memoirs*. He has written history very much as Grant and Sherman,—like himself, men of the middle West,—made it. There are doubtless better fashions in narrative prose, but for this particular narrative none, surely, could be more appropriate. Suppose Mr. Rhodes had elected to tell his story in the manner of our most distinctly literary personages—Mr. Barrett Wendell, for example, or Mr. Henry James! There are books which might be spoiled by a pronounced literary flavor, and this is one of them. It is certainly desirable that a history of the United States be written in a language which the mass of Americans can readily understand.

Were there space for more reflection, there is food for it in the fact that even to such a history as this, a history of the most absorbing years of all our past, the mass of Americans seem as yet woefully indifferent. Quite possibly, there are as yet more Americans laudably busy with writing about our past than there are eager purchasers and readers of their books. I say "as yet", because it seems hardly probable that this state of things will continue, or that this so worthy book of Mr. Rhodes will not, sooner or later, win for itself a public somewhat commensurate with the favor it has won from the critics. Apart from all its other merits, it has one quality that insures it permanence of value. It can no more be superseded than Grant's *Memoirs*; for to future generations it will have the character of a contemporary document relating to all the great events of the Civil War period. Other histories may in various ways surpass it, but none can ever take its place. Mr. Rhodes is forever fortunate in standing at what is perhaps the very best distance from his subject.

But even if this were not so, one would hate to believe that his countrymen are too absorbed in their present-day affairs, which it is hard to find inspiring, to attend to this dignified recital of so much that is inspiring and heroic in their still recent past. Let us hope, therefore, that Mr. Rhodes, now that his case with the scholarly is won, may make a few concessions to those whom the very air and method of scholarship affrights. Perhaps he will some day find time to prepare a popular edition, divested of all notes that are merely references to authorities, the text cleared of citations that convince but do not interest, the whole

lessened in bulk and unified in narrative effect. In some such form the work might go directly into the hands of a great number who will otherwise profit by Mr. Rhodes's labors only through other men's books. But in any case it will doubtless long remain the source from which students will draw, whether at first hand or at second hand, their soundest knowledge of the great American conflict.

W. G. BROWN.

MINOR NOTICES

Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, New Series, Volume XVIII. (London, 1905, pp. 391). Among the papers read before the Royal Historical Society in 1904 the address by the president, Dr. G. W. Prothero, and the study by Colonel E. M. Lloyd on Canning and Spanish America are of especial interest to American readers. In his presidential address Dr. Prothero gives an interesting survey of the status of recent history in the curricula of English colleges and universities. Contrary to the practice on the Continent and in America, the field of modern history since the Congress of Vienna has been entirely neglected in England. At Oxford the line has been sharply drawn at 1815 for foreign history, and at 1837 for domestic. For the period after these dates no instruction was provided,¹ and a man at Oxford might obtain the highest honors in history and know nothing of "Louis Philippe or Napoleon III., of Lincoln or Bismarck or Cavour, of the American Civil War or the making of the German Empire". At his own university, Cambridge, Dr. Prothero considers the instruction in nineteenth-century history likewise quite inadequate, and while conditions are slightly better at London and Manchester, the subject receives much less attention in England than on the Continent or in the United States. Dr. Prothero's address should be read in connection with Professor Andrews's paper on Recent European History in American Colleges; P. Caron and Th. Sagnac, *Études d' Histoire Moderne en France*, and the first part of the careful study by M. Lot, *L'Enseignement de l'Histoire et de l'Histoire de l'Art dans les Universités d'Allemagne et de France*.

Colonel Lloyd's study of Canning and Spanish America calls to mind Mr. H. W. V. Temperley's *Life of Canning* which has just appeared. The difference in the attitude of the two men toward Canning is interesting; the biographer, as one would expect, being much more sympathetic. Indeed Colonel Lloyd seems to emphasize rather unduly what Croker called the insincerity of the great statesman.. A well-constructed paper by Miss Enid M. G. Routh on "The Attempts to establish a Balance of Power" (1648-1702), represents the successful work for the Alexander Prize. It would seem as if an investigation into a subject in which the ambitions of France played so conspicuous

¹ In a footnote Dr. Prothero states that the area of study included in the Honours School of Modern History at Oxford has since the date of his address been extended to include the years from 1815 to 1878.